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COUNTRY Bulgaria

SUBJECT Promulgation of New Law Governing "Traitors"

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1. The Bulgarian Government has promulgated a new law which, in its brutality, surpasses anything known in history. This law proclaims as traitors, subject automatically to the death sentence, all escapees and refugees who subsequently refuse a "request" of the Government to return to Bulgaria. Traitors, according to the new Bulgarian law, include all those who leave, or have left, Bulgarian territory with or without permission of the authorities. No time limit has been specified, which means that even those who left under the Monarchy can be included.
2. Any Bulgarian outside of the country who receives a request to return to Bulgaria, and refuses to do so, thereby commits a crime against the Government for which he and all his relatives and friends in Bulgaria can be subjected to severe punishment. Everyone who may have knowledge of an escapee's "criminal intentions", his relatives and friends, but have "failed to denounce him to the authorities" will be sentenced to imprisonment for five to ten years. The law further states that the remaining members of the family, even though they may have nothing in common with the escapee, will be deprived of their civil rights, their property will be confiscated and they will be sent to "labor-educational works", forced labor camps.
3. This scandalous and barbaric decree of the Bulgarian Government is a trial balloon. Many times in the past, Bulgaria has enacted laws which were later adopted by the other Satellite countries. If the West does not lodge a strong protest against this unprecedented decree setting up collective responsibility in its most horrible form, then, in the near future, similar decrees will be promulgated in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Hungary.

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